



TAKING THE LULAV

סדר נטילת לולב

*For Sukkot when it falls on a weekday
(The lulav and etrog are not used on Shabbat.)*

“...you shall take the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before Adonai your God seven days” (Leviticus 23:40).

The four varieties specified in this verse are known, in order, as etrog (citron), lulav (palm), hadas (myrtle), and aravah (willow). These last two are bound together with the lulav, which you hold with the spine facing you — with three hadasim to the right and two aravot to the left. These three varieties bound together are referred to as lulav, the palm being the tallest and most prominent of the three.

Stand holding the lulav in the right hand, the etrog in the left, with your hands close together. When reciting the b'rakhah, hold the etrog with the pitam (tip) facing down.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לֹלֵב.

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat lulav.

Praised are You Adonai our God, who rules the universe,
instilling in us the holiness of mitzvot
by commanding us to take the *lulav*.

*Each year the following is recited upon taking
the lulav for the first time:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהֵיְחִינוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנוֹ הַזֶּה.

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
she-he'heyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi-anu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Praised are You Adonai our God, who rules the universe,
granting us life, sustaining us,
and enabling us to reach this day.

After the b'rakhah, turn the etrog over, and hold it so the pitam faces up. Shake the lulav three times in each direction: to the front, to the right, behind you (over your right shoulder), to the left, then upward, then down.

The Four Species

Just as the *etrog* has both flavor and fragrance, so there are Israelites who are endowed both with Torah and with good deeds.

Just as the [fruit of the] *lulav* has flavor but lacks fragrance, so there are Israelites who are endowed with Torah but lack good deeds.

Just as the *hadas* has fragrance but lacks flavor, so there are Israelites who are endowed with good deeds but lack Torah.

Just as the *aravah* lacks both flavor and fragrance, so there are Israelites who lack both Torah and good deeds.

What does the Holy One do about them? God does not wish to destroy them. He binds them all together into one group and these atone for those.

Leviticus Rabbah 30:12

“All my bones shall say, ‘Adonai, who is like You?’” (Psalm 35:10). Rabbi Mani taught: This verse refers to the *lulav*. The spine of the *lulav* resembles the spine of human beings. The *hadas* resembles the eye. The *aravah* resembles the mouth. The *etrog* resembles the heart. Said David: There are no more important parts of the body than these. They are equivalent to the entire body. Thus it is said: “All my bones shall say, ‘Adonai, who is like You?’”

Leviticus Rabbah 30:14

A stolen or withered *lulav* is invalid. Said Rabbi Ammi: “A withered *lulav* is invalid because it is not ‘goodly’ (Leviticus 23:40). A stolen one is invalid because it is a *mitzvah* fulfilled by performing a transgression.” . . . Said the Holy One: “I hate robbery with burnt offerings’ (Isaiah 61:8). Let My children learn from Me and keep away from robbery.”

Sukkah 30a